

O D E

B Y

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON

T O

Mrs. T H R A L E.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

[Entered at Stationers Hall.]

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O D E

B Y

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

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T O

MRS. THRALE,

UPON THEIR SUPPOSED APPROACHING NUPTIALS.

Tauri ruentis
In venerem tolerare pondus.—HOR.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER, NEW-BOND-STREET.

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B Y

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

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Messrs H R A L E

UPON THEIR REQUEST ATTACHED NUMBERS



L O M B O W
Printed for R. T. W. B. D. P. R. M.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

MR. HENRY THRALE, brewer, in the borough of Southwark (I say it without flattery, or interested hopes of reward from his surviving relict and daughters), was one of the most eminent and opulent traders that England ever had. He was, moreover, a well-built, stout man, in his person. His wife, Mrs. Hester Lynch, whose maiden name was Salusbury, was of creditable Welch extraction. She was rather a little woman, but smart, of pregnant parts, and some share of book-learning. They kept a very plentiful table, both for meat and drink, to which those who are called *Wits*, and also many ingenious artists, gladly repaired as to a convenient house of call, where they had nothing to pay, except their court to Mrs. Thrale, who doubtless deserved, while she was flattered by their compliments. The most distinguished of them, and, as one may say, the foreman of the whole, was Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, the celebrated Lichfield author, who wrote an English Dictionary, and several works of a good moral tendency, and was famous, besides, for shrewd sayings and lively jokes. He was a very large man, and by no means well-looking, but rather the contrary; neither was he neat and cleanly in his person and dress. He was, notwithstanding, a

no

no small favourite with Mrs. Thrale, both in her husband's life-time, and for some short while after; and from a collection of their letters, which is extant, and has been put forth in print by herself, it appears that there was no over-delicate niceness, but truly the plainest familiarity between them; as witness these, and the like passages:—"I hope, in time, to be like the great bull." lett. 34.—"Dr. Taylor desires always to have his compliments sent. He is, in his usual way, very busy getting a bull to his cows, and a dog to his bitches. Old Shakespeare is dead, and he wants to buy another horse to his mares." lett. 180.—"You must take the chance of finding me, *better or worse*. This you may know at present, that my *affection* for you is not diminished, and my *expectation* from you is increased." lett. 277.—"I am harrassed by a very disagreeable operation of the *cantharides*, which I am endeavouring to *control* by copious dilution." lett. 303.—"On the 19th of last month I evacuated twenty pints of water." lett. 342.

Mr. Thrale and his wife had a family of five daughters, to whom they did not grudge to give every piece of genteel education. Signor Baretto was entertained in the house, at bed and board, to teach them the Italian tongue; and Signor Piozzi, it is believed, was liberally rewarded for teaching them to sing, and play on the harpsichord. Mrs. Thrale had not an *ear*, as the saying is, but she had an *eye* to this her daughter's music-master,

master, who, it appears, by her said publication, was permitted to *love* her. "Piozzi, I find, is coming, and when *he* comes, and *I* come, you will have two about you that *love* you." lett. 275. This was in her widowhood; and indeed it is plain that Dr. Samuel Johnson himself had then also pretensions to her; the disappointment of which, by her preference of Signor Piozzi, whom she afterwards married, no doubt contributed, with other considerations, to his writing that severe answer on her informing him of her resolution, which answer she has very prudently suppressed.

Indeed, recently after the death of Mr. Henry Thrale, there were not wanting many who conjectured that a matrimonial union would take place between the widow and Dr. Samuel Johnson; and some went so far as to assert, that it was his determined purpose, not only to carry on the business under the *firm* of the brewery, but even to assume the name and arms of Thrale. Upon this foundation, and no better, the bellman, or some other such rhymster of the Borough, bantered the business in the following homely lines:

Hail, Johnson!

Thrale Johnson,

Brewer of good ale, Johnson;

While thus you drive so bold a trade,

Your cash will never fail, Johnson.

Though Madam's somewhat stale, Johnson,

You'll find she'll yet be frail, Johnson;

For many years she tried your head,

And now she'll try — — —, Johnson.

Whether

Whether it was that a copy of this balderdash reached Dr. Samuel Johnson, and made him anxious lest posterity should look upon his tender passion as of a very coarse and vulgar nature, or whether he was merely incited by her blandishments to give a specimen of his juvenile vivacity, or from whatever other cause, it would seem, that in the confidence of their being speedily joined in marriage, he sent her the following wedding verses; of which, it is probable, she gave a copy to Signor Baretta, or to some other person with whom she at that time was intimate.

The same having, by some strange chance, fallen into my hands, I thought I could not do better than lay them before the publick.

With respect to their being certainly written by Dr. Samuel Johnson, I honestly confess I am no judge of such matters, and therefore will not pretend to say any thing of my own knowledge upon that head. But I am well assured by a person of skill, that they have the undoubted sterling mark, and that no other man in the kingdom could make them but himself.

ARGUMENT.

A R G U M E N T.

THE Poet, pleased with the reminiscence of his poetical powers, prepares to concentrate them in his Mistress—He prostrates his dignity to her in versatility of character—Plumes himself on his fancied felicity, and, by a bold image, equal to any in Anacreon, at once personifies, and personates that Beer which was the glory of her house—Touches on his jealousy of Signor Piozzi—Exults in his supposed victory over his rival—Describes the congratulations on the nuptials between him and his dearest dear lady; but characteristically hints at the malignity of human nature—Represents the envy with which their happiness is beheld—Weary of continence, solaces himself with the prospect of future enjoyment—Paints it with vigorous strokes and glowing colours—Takes care to give it the delicate sanction of sentiment—Assumes a reflex honour, by projecting illustrious matches for his lady's daughters by her first husband; but maintains his own superiority, by figuring himself the father of an heir male—Concludes, in mythological enthusiasm, that he is greater than Atlas.

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IF e'er my fingers touch'd the lyre,

In satire fierce, in pleasure gay,

Shall not my **THRALIA**'s smiles inspire?

Shall **SAM** refuse the sportive lay?

My dearest lady! view your slave,

Behold him as your very **SCRUB**,

Eager to write as authour grave,

Or govern well the brewing tub.

To rich felicity thus rais'd,

My bosom glows with amorous fire ;

Porter no longer shall be prais'd ;

'Tis I MYSELF am *Thrale's Entire* !

Piozzi once alarm'd my fears,

Till beauteous MARY's tragick fate

And RIZZIO's tale dissolv'd in tears

My mistress, ere it was too late.

Indignant

Indignant thought to English pride !

That any eye should ever see

JOHNSON one moment set aside

For *Tweedledum* or *Tweedledee*.

Congratulating crowds shall come,

Our new-born happiness to hail,

Whether at ball, at rout, at drum ;

—But human spite will still prevail.

For

For though they come in pleasing guise,

And cry, "The wise deserve the fair!"

They look askance with envious eyes,

As Satan look'd at the first pair.

Ascetick now thy lover lives,

Nor dares to touch, nor dares to kiss ;

Yet prurient fancy sometimes gives

A prelibation of our bliss.

Convuls'd

Convuls'd in love's tumultuous throws,

We feel the aphrodisian spasm ;

Tir'd nature must, at last, repose,

Then Wit and Wisdom fill the chasm.

Nor only are our limbs entwin'd,

And lip in rapture glued to lip ;

Lock'd in embraces of the mind ;

Imagination's sweets we sip.

Five daughters by a former spouse

Shall match with nobles of the land;

The fruit of our more fervent vows

A pillar of the state shall stand

Greater than Atlas was of yore,

A nobler charge to me is given;

The sphere he on his shoulders bore,

I, with my arms, encircle Heaven!

11:7:49

T H E E N D.